

UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

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for a

CHILDREN'S TRAMPOLINE WITH SUPPORTING CHARACTER

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention concerns trampolines. It relates especially to a child's trampoline which promotes the safety and enjoyment of the child using the trampoline.

5 As is well known, trampolines invariably include a flexible resilient rebounding surface which is supported at its periphery by a frame so that the rebounding surface is elevated above the ground. A child can step on the rebounding surface and bounce up and down and perform various acrobatics, aided by the resiliency of the rebound surface. Thus the trampoline exercises the child and helps to improve his/her coordination.

10 When using a trampoline, safety is always of some concern. Therefore, it is desirable to take steps to prevent a child from falling from the trampoline. Sometimes this is accomplished by providing a fence around the rebound surface. However, in the case of a child's trampoline of the type of which we are concerned here, this would be impractical if not unnecessary because the rebound surface is located close to the ground or
15 other support surface and it has a relatively small area. Therefore, enclosing that area with a fence would result in a relatively claustrophobic play space on the trampoline.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, the present invention aims to provide a trampoline for use by small children which is open, yet reduces the chances of a child falling from the trampoline.

20 Another object of the invention is to provide such a trampoline which also increases a child's enjoyment when using the trampoline.

Another object of the invention is to provide a trampoline of this type which provides a companion for the child using the trampoline.

Other objects will, in part, be obvious and will, in part, appear hereinafter.

The invention accordingly comprises the features of construction, combination of elements and arrangement of parts which will be exemplified in the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

Briefly, my trampoline comprises the usual frame which supports a resilient rebounding surface above the ground or other support surface. Since the trampoline is for use especially by small children, the rebound surface has a relatively small area and elevation.

In order to assist a small child in using the trampoline and remaining on the rebounding surface thereof, the trampoline includes an upstanding child supporting device at the periphery of the rebounding surface. The character has arms or projection which the child can grasp while bouncing on the trampoline thereby decreasing the likelihood of the child inadvertently falling down or bouncing off the trampoline.

Preferably, the child supporting device is in form of an animal or human character to which the child can relate and which has floppy or flexible extremities or appendages which can move about as the child bounces up and down on the trampoline. Thus the device functions as an animated companion for the child.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a fuller understanding of the nature and objects of the invention, reference should be made to the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view from below of a trampoline incorporating the invention; and

FIG. 2 is a perspective view from above thereof.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2 of the drawings, the trampoline comprises a frame shown generally at 10 which supports a resilient rebound surface 12 above the ground or other surface. The frame comprises a plurality, herein four, inverted U-shaped frame members 10a whose legs are connected together end to end in a square by suitable fasteners 14, e.g. bolts, clamps or the like. The rebound surface 12 is tied to the bridging portions of frame members 10a by suitable means such as cords 16 which are threaded through eyelets 18 of (FIG. 2) adjacent to the edge of the rebounding surface and laced around the frames members. Preferably, a mat or cushion 22 extends around the edge margin of the rebound surface and over the bridging portions of the frame members 10a to cushion the frame member.

Typically the rebounding surface 12 is relatively small, e.g. 3 to 4 feet on a side and is elevated only a relatively small distance, e.g. 10 to 18 inches.

Still referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, trampoline 10 also includes an upstanding child supporting device shown generally at 26. A child C while bouncing on the rebounding surface 12 can hold onto the device 26 as shown in FIG. 1. Thus, the device helps to support the child in an upright position while bouncing up and down and minimizes the likelihood of the child falling off the trampoline. The device also provides an animated companion for the child using the trampoline.

As seen from the drawing figures, the device 26 comprises an internal armature consisting of a pair of more or less mirror image stanchions posts 32, 32 whose lower end segments 32a, 32a are secured to the adjacent legs of frame members 10a by fasteners 34 (FIG. 1) which may be conventional bolts, clamps or the like. As best seen in FIG. 2, the posts 32 have upper end segments 32b which splay out away from one another.

The child supporting device 26 also includes a padded covering 36 which covers posts 32, 32 above the rebounding mat 12. Preferably, the covering 36 is in the form of an animal or human character whose appearance would be pleasing to a child. Also, the covering 36 desirably includes extension portions 36a which cover post segments 32a to provide a relatively firm structure which the child C can hold onto while bouncing up and

down on the rebounding surface 12. Desirably also, the covering 36 includes extremities or other extensions such as legs 36b which are relatively flexible and free to move relative to the child holding onto the device 26, thereby animating the character and adding to the child's enjoyment.

5 It will thus be seen that the objects set forth above among those made apparent from the preceding description are efficiently attained. Also, certain changes may be made in the above construction without departing from the scope of the invention. For example, the trampoline rebounding surface may have any one of a variety of shapes such as round, rectangular, etc. and the child supporting device 26 may have a variety of
10 human and animal forms with arms or other extremities or protrusions which the child C may hold onto while playing on the trampoline. Also, while the armature, i.e. post 32,32 in the illustrated child support device 26 is relatively stiff, it could also be constructed by one or more leaf springs so that the device 26 can flex and thereby move to some extent with the child C bouncing on the trampoline. Therefore it is intended that all matter con-
15 tained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

It is also to be understood that the following claims are intended to cover all of the generic and specific features of the invention described herein.

What is claimed is: